AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus for determining a sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of at least two word alternatives ~~words~~ output by a word recognition unit in response to a common input word to be recognised, the apparatus comprising:

a receiver operable to receive ~~means for receiving~~ a first sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of a first one of said at least two word alternatives output by said word recognition unit and operable to receive ~~words and for receiving~~ a second sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of a second one of said at least two ~~words~~ word alternatives output by said word recognition unit;

an aligner operable to align and to compare ~~means for aligning and for comparing~~ sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the first sequence with sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the second sequence to form a number of aligned pairs of sub-word ~~units~~ unit labels; and

a processor operable to process the aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels formed by said aligner, to determine an output ~~means for determining~~ sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of the ~~received words in dependence upon the aligned pairs of sub-word units determined by said aligning and comparing means~~ at least two word alternatives.

2.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said processor ~~determining means~~ is operable to determine said output sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ by determining, for each aligned pair of sub-word ~~units~~ unit

labels, a sub-word unit <u>label</u> that [[it]] <u>is</u> confusingly similar to the first and second

sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ of the aligned pair.

   3. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein

said <u>processor</u> ~~determining means~~ comprises:

   <u>a</u> first ~~comparing means for comparing~~ <u>comparator operable to compare</u>, for

each aligned pair, the first sequence sub-word unit <u>label</u> in the aligned pair with each of a

plurality of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ taken from a set of predetermined sub-word ~~units~~

<u>unit labels</u>, to provide a corresponding plurality of comparison scores representative of the

similarities between the first sequence sub-word unit <u>label</u> and the respective sub-word <u>unit</u>

<u>labels</u> ~~units~~ of the set;

   <u>a</u> second ~~comparing means for comparing~~ <u>comparator operable to compare</u>,

for each aligned pair, the second sequence sub-word unit <u>label</u> in the aligned pair with each

of said plurality of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ from the set, to provide a further

corresponding plurality of comparison scores representative of the similarities between said

second sequence sub-word unit <u>label</u> and the respective sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ of the

set;

   <u>a combiner operable to combine</u> ~~means for combining~~ the comparison

scores obtained when comparing the first and second sequence sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~

in the aligned pair with the same sub-word unit <u>label</u> from the set, to generate a plurality of

combined comparison scores;

   <u>a</u> third ~~comparing means for comparing~~ <u>comparator operable to compare</u>,

- 3 -

for each aligned pair, the combined comparison scores generated by said <u>combiner</u> ~~combining means~~ for the aligned pair; and

~~means for determining~~ <u>a determiner operable to determine</u>, for each aligned pair of sub-word ~~units~~ <u>unit labels</u>, a sub-word unit <u>label</u> representative of the sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ in the aligned pair in dependence upon a comparison result output by said third <u>comparator</u> ~~comparing means~~ for the aligned pair.

4.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said first and second <u>comparators</u> ~~comparing means~~ are operable to compare the first sequence sub-word unit <u>label</u> and the second sequence sub-word unit <u>label</u> respectively with each of the sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ in said set of sub-word ~~units~~ <u>unit labels</u>.

5.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said first and second <u>comparators</u> ~~comparing means~~ are operable to provide comparison scores which are indicative of a probability of confusing the corresponding sub-word unit <u>label</u> taken from the set of predetermined sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ as the sub-word unit <u>label</u> in the aligned pair.

6.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said <u>combiner</u> ~~combining means~~ is operable to combine the comparison scores in order to multiply the probabilities of confusing the corresponding sub-word unit <u>label</u> taken from the set as the sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ in the aligned pair.

7.	(Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein each of said sub-word unit labels units in said set of predetermined sub-word unit labels units has a predetermined probability of occurring within a sequence of sub-word unit labels units and wherein said combiner combining means is operable to weight weigh each of said combined comparison scores in dependence upon the respective probability of occurrence for the sub-word unit label of the set used to generate the combined comparison score.

8.	(Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said combiner combining means is operable to combine said comparison scores by calculating:

$$P\!\left(d_i^1 \middle| p_r\right) P\!\left(d_j^2 \middle| p_r\right) P\!\left(p_r\right)$$

where d_i^1 and d_j^2 are an aligned pair of first and second sequence sub-word unit labels units respectively, $\underline{P(d_i^1 | p_r)}$ [[$(P(d_i | p_r))$]] is the comparison score output by said first comparator comparing means and is representative of the probability of confusing set sub-word unit label p_r as first sequence sub-word unit label d_i^1; $P(d_j^2 | p_r)$ is the comparison score output by said second comparator comparing means and is representative of the probability of confusing set sub-word unit label p_r as second sequence sub-word unit label d_j^2; and $P(p_r)$ is a weight which represents the probability of set sub-word unit label p_r occurring in a sequence of sub-word units unit labels.

9.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said third comparator ~~comparing means~~ is operable to identify the set sub-word unit label p_r which gives the maximum combined comparison score and wherein said determiner ~~determining means~~ is operable to determine said sub-word unit label representative of the sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ in the aligned pair as being the sub-word unit label which provides the maximum combined comparison score.

10.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said ~~comparison scores represent log probabilities and wherein said~~ compare combiner ~~combining means~~ is operable to multiply said probabilities by adding the respective comparison scores.

11.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 3, wherein each of the sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ in said first and second sequences of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ belong to said set of predetermined sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ and wherein said first and second comparators ~~comparing means~~ are operable to provide said comparison scores using predetermined data which relate the sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ in said set to each other.

12.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said predetermined data comprises, for each sub-word unit label in the set of sub-word ~~units~~ unit labels, a probability for confusing that sub-word unit label with each of the other sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ in the set of sub-word ~~units~~ unit labels.

13.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said aligner ~~aligning and comparing means~~ comprises a dynamic programmer operable to align ~~programming means for aligning~~ said first and second sequences of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ using a dynamic programming technique.

14.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said dynamic programmer ~~programming means~~ is operable to determine an optimum alignment between said first and second sequences of sub-word ~~units~~ unit labels.

15.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each of said sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ represents a phoneme.

16.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said receiver ~~receiving means~~ is operable to receive a third sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of a third word alternative ~~one of the words~~ output by said word recognition unit and wherein said aligner ~~aligning and comparing means~~ is operable to simultaneously align and compare the sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the first, second and third sequences of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~.

17.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said receiver ~~receiving means~~ is operable to receive a third sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of a third word alternative ~~one of said words~~ output by said word

recognition unit and wherein said <u>aligner</u> ~~aligning and comparing means~~ is operable to

align and compare two sequences of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ at a time.

18.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, further

comprising a word to sub-word unit <u>label</u> dictionary which is operable to receive the <u>at</u>

<u>least two word alternatives</u> ~~words~~ output by said word recognition unit and to generate

therefrom said <u>first and second</u> sequences of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~.

19.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, further

comprising <u>an annotator operable to annotate</u> ~~means for annotating~~ a data file using the

<u>output sequence of</u> sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ output <u>determined</u> by said ~~determining~~

~~means~~ <u>processor</u>.

20.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 19, wherein

said <u>annotator</u> ~~annotating means~~ is operable to annotate said data file using said <u>output</u>

<u>sequence of</u> sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ and said <u>at least two word alternatives</u> ~~words~~ output

by said word recognition unit.

21.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 20, wherein

said <u>output</u> sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ and said <u>at least two word alternatives</u>

~~words~~ are combined to form annotation data for the data file.

- 8 -

22.   (Original) An apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said data file is one of: an audio data file, a video data file, an image data file or a text data file.

23.   (Original) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said word recognition unit comprises a speech recognition system.

24.   (Original) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said word recognition unit comprises a handwriting recognition system.

25.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus for determining a sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ representative of at least two words, the apparatus comprising:

a receiver operable to receive ~~means for receiving~~ a first sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ representative of a first word and ~~for receiving~~ a second sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ representative of a second word;

<u>an aligner operable to align</u> ~~means for aligning~~ sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ of the first sequence with sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ of the second sequence to form a number of aligned pairs of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~; and

~~means for determining~~ a <u>processor operable to process the aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels formed by said aligner to determine an output</u> sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ representative of the first and second sequences of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ by determining, for each aligned pair of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~, a sub-word unit <u>label</u> that is confusingly similar to the ~~first and second~~ sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ of the aligned pair.

- 9 -

26.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus for determining a sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ representative of at least two <u>word alternatives</u> ~~words~~ output by a word recognition unit in response to a common input word to be recognised, the apparatus comprising:

a <u>receiver operable to receive</u> ~~means for receiving~~ the <u>word alternatives</u> ~~words~~ output by the word recognition unit;

a <u>generator operable to generate, for each received word alternative,</u> ~~means for generating~~ a sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ representative of ~~each of~~ the <u>word alternative</u> ~~received words~~;

an <u>aligner operable to align and compare</u> ~~means for aligning and comparing~~ the sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units from~~ <u>of</u> each generated sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ to identify a number aligned groups of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~; and

~~means for determining~~ a <u>processor operable to process the aligned groups of sub-word unit labels identified by said aligner, to determine an output</u> sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ representative of the received ~~words in dependence upon the aligned groups of sub-word units determined by said aligning and comparing means~~ <u>word alternatives</u>.

27.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus for determining a sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ representative of at least two <u>word alternatives</u> ~~words~~ output by a word recognition unit in response to a common input word to be recognised, the apparatus comprising:

a receiver operable to receive ~~means for receiving~~ the at least two word

alternatives ~~words~~ output by the word recognition unit;

a generator operable to generate, for each received word alternative, ~~means~~

~~for generating~~ a sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of ~~each of~~ the

received word alternative ~~words~~;

an aligner operable to align and compare ~~means for aligning and comparing~~

the sub-word unit labels ~~units from~~ of each generated sequence of sub-word unit labels

~~units~~ to identify a number aligned groups of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~; and

~~means for determining~~ a processor operable to process the aligned groups of

sub-word unit labels identified by said aligner, to determine an output sequence of

sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of the ~~first and second sequences of sub-word~~

~~units~~ at least two word alternatives by determining, for each ~~of the sub-word units in an~~

aligned group of sub-word unit labels, a sub-word unit label that it confusingly similar to

the sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the group.

28.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus for determining a sequence of

sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of at least two word alternatives ~~words~~ output by

a word recognition unit in response to a common input word to be recognised, the

apparatus comprising:

a receiver operable to receive ~~means for receiving~~ a first sequence of

sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of a first one of said at least two word alternatives

output by said word recognition unit and operable to receive ~~words and for receiving~~ a

second sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of a second one of said at least two word alternatives output by said word recognition unit ~~words~~;

an aligner operable to align and compare ~~means for aligning and for comparing~~ sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the first sequence with sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the second sequence to form a number of aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~;

a first comparator operable to compare, ~~comparing means for comparing~~, for each aligned pair, the first sequence sub-word unit label in the aligned pair with each of a plurality of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ taken from a set of predetermined sub-word unit labels ~~units~~, to provide a corresponding plurality of comparison scores representative of the similarities between the first sequence sub-word unit label and the respective sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the set;

a second comparator operable to compare ~~comparing means for comparing~~, for each aligned pair, the second sequence sub-word unit label in the aligned pair with each of said plurality of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ from the set, to provide a further corresponding plurality of comparison scores representative of the similarities between said second sequence sub-word unit label and the respective sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the set;

a combiner operable to combine ~~means for combining~~ the comparison scores obtained when comparing the first and second sequence sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ in the aligned pair with the same sub-word unit label from the set, to generate a plurality of combined comparison scores;

a third comparator operable to compare, ~~comparing means for comparing~~,

- 12 -

for each aligned pair, the combined comparison scores generated by said <u>combiner</u> <s>combining means</s> for the aligned pair; and

a <u>determiner operable to determine</u> <s>means for determining</s>, for each aligned pair of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> <s>units</s>, a sub-word unit <u>label</u> representative of the sub-word <u>unit labels</u> <s>units</s> in the aligned pair in dependence upon a comparison result output by said third <u>comparator</u> <s>comparing means</s> for the aligned pair.

29.   (Currently Amended) A method of determining a sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> <s>units</s> representative of at least two <u>word alternatives</u> <s>words</s> output by a word recognition unit in response to a common input word to be recognised, the method comprising:

receiving a first sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> <s>units</s> representative of a first one of said at least two <u>word alternatives output by said word recognition unit</u> <s>words</s>;

receiving a second sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> <s>units</s> representative of a second one of said at least two <u>word alternatives output by said word recognition unit</u> <s>words</s>;

aligning and comparing sub-word <u>unit labels</u> <s>units</s> of the first sequence with sub-word <u>unit labels</u> <s>units</s> of the second sequence to form a number of aligned pairs of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> <s>units</s>; and

<u>processing the aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels formed in said aligning step, to determine an output</u> <s>determining a</s> sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> <s>units</s> representative of the <u>at least two word alternatives.</u> <s>received sequences of sub-word units in</s>

dependence upon the aligned pairs of sub-word units determined in said aligning and comparing step.

30.　　(Currently Amended) A method according to claim 29, wherein said processing ~~determining~~ step determines said <u>output</u> sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ by determining, for each aligned pair of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~, a sub-word unit <u>label</u> that is confusingly similar to the first and second sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ of the aligned pair.

31.　　(Currently Amended) A method according to claim 29, wherein said processing ~~determining~~ step comprises:

a first comparing step of comparing, for each aligned pair, the first sequence sub-word unit <u>label</u> in the aligned pair with each of a plurality of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ taken from a set of predetermined sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~, to provide a corresponding plurality of comparison scores representative of the similarities between the first sequence sub-word unit <u>label</u> and the respective sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ of the set;

a second comparing step of comparing, for each aligned pair, the second sequence sub-word unit <u>label</u> in the aligned pair with each of said plurality of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ from the set, to provide a further corresponding plurality of comparison scores representative of the similarities between said second sequence sub-word unit <u>label</u> and the respective sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ of the set;

combining the comparison scores obtained when comparing the first and

second sequence sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ in the aligned pair with the same sub-word unit

<u>label</u> from the set, to generate a plurality of combined comparison scores;

a third comparing step of comparing, for each aligned pair, the combined

comparison scores generated in said combining step for the aligned pair; and

determining, for each aligned pair, a sub-word unit <u>label</u> representative of

the sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ in the aligned pair in dependence upon a comparison result

output from said third comparing step for the aligned pair.

32.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 31, wherein said

first and second comparing steps compare the first sequence sub-word unit <u>label</u> and the

second sequence sub-word unit <u>label</u> respectively with each of the sub-word <u>unit labels</u>

~~units~~ in said set of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~.

33.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 31, wherein said

first and second comparing steps provide comparison scores which are indicative of a

probability of confusing the corresponding sub-word unit <u>label</u> taken from the set of

predetermined sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ as the sub-word unit <u>label</u> in the aligned pair.

34.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 33, wherein said

combining step combines the comparison scores in order to multiply the probabilities of

confusing the corresponding sub-word unit <u>label</u> taken from the set as the sub-word <u>unit</u>

<u>labels</u> ~~units~~ in the aligned pair.

35.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 34, wherein

each of said sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ in said set of predetermined sub-word <u>unit labels</u>

~~units~~ has a predetermined probability of occurring within a sequence of sub-word <u>unit</u>

<u>labels</u> ~~units~~ and wherein said combining step <u>weights</u> ~~weighs~~ each of said combined

comparison scores in dependence upon the respective probability of occurrence for the

sub-word unit <u>label</u> of the set used to generate the combined comparison score.

36.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 35, wherein said

combining step combines said comparison scores by calculating:

$$P\!\left(d_i^1\middle|p_r\right)P\!\left(d_j^2\middle|p_r\right)P\!\left(p_r\right)$$

where d_i^1 and d_j^2 are an aligned pair of first and second sequence sub-word

<u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ respectively; <u>P(d$_i^1$|p$_r$)</u> [[(P(d$_i$|p$_r$))]] is the comparison score output by said

first comparing ~~means~~ <u>step</u> and is representative of the probability of confusing set

sub-word unit <u>label</u> p$_r$ as first sequence sub-word unit <u>label</u> d$_i^1$; P(d$_j^2$|p$_r$) is the comparison

score output by said second comparing ~~means~~ <u>step</u> and is representative of the probability

of confusing set sub-word unit <u>label</u> p$_r$ as second sequence sub-word unit <u>label</u> d$_j^2$; and

P(p$_r$) is a weight which represents the probability of set sub-word unit <u>label</u> p$_r$ occurring in

a sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~.

37.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 36, wherein said third comparing step identifies the set sub-word unit label p_r which gives the maximum combined comparison score and wherein said determining step determines said sub-word unit label representative of the sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ in the aligned pair as being the sub-word unit label which provides the maximum combined comparison score.

38.   (Original) A method according to claim 34, wherein said comparison scores represent log probabilities and wherein said combining step multiplies said probabilities by adding the respective comparison scores.

39.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 31, wherein each of the sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ in said first and second sequences of sub-word units belong to said set of predetermined sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ and wherein said first and second comparing steps provide said comparison scores using predetermined data which relate the sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ in said set to each other.

40.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 39, wherein said predetermined data comprises, for each sub-word unit label in the set of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~, a probability for confusing that sub-word unit label with each of the other sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ in the set of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~.

41.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 29, wherein said aligning and comparing step uses a dynamic programming technique to align said first and second sequences of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~.

42.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 41, wherein said dynamic programming technique determines an optimum alignment between said first and second sequences of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~.

43.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 29, wherein each of said sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ represents a phoneme.

44.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 29, further comprising receiving a third sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of a third word alternative ~~one of the words~~ output by said word recognition unit and wherein said aligning and comparing step simultaneously aligns and compares the sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the first, second and third sequences of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~.

45.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 29, further comprising receiving a third sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of a third word alternative ~~one of said words~~ output by said recognition unit and wherein said aligning and comparing step aligns and compares two sequences of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ at a time.

46.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 29, further comprising the step of using a word to sub-word unit label dictionary to convert the words output by said word recognition unit into said sequences of sub-word unit labels units.

47.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 29, further comprising the step of annotating a data file using the sub-word unit labels determined units output by said processing determining step.

48.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 47, wherein said annotating step annotates said data file using said output sequence of sub-word unit labels units and said word alternatives words output by said word recognition unit.

49.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 48, wherein said output sequence of sub-word unit labels units and said word alternatives words are combined to form annotation data for the data file.

50.   (Original) A method according to claim 47, wherein said data file is one of: an audio data file, a video data file, an image data file, or a text data file.

51.   (Original) A method according to claim 29, wherein said word recognition unit comprises a speech recognition system.

52.   (Original) A method apparatus according to claim 29, wherein said word recognition unit comprises a handwriting recognition system.

53.   (Currently Amended) A method of determining a sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of at least two words, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

receiving a first sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of a first word;

receiving a second sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of a second word;

aligning sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the first sequence with sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the second sequence to form a number of aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~; and

processing the aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels formed in said aligning step, to determine an output ~~determining a~~ sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of the first and second sequences of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ by determining, for each aligned pair of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~, a sub-word unit label that is confusingly similar to the ~~first and second~~ sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the aligned pair.

54.   (Currently Amended) A method of determining a sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of at least two word alternatives ~~words~~ output by a

word recognition unit in response to a common input word to be recognised, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

receiving the <u>word alternative</u> ~~words~~ output by the word recognition unit;

generating<u>, for each received word alternative,</u> a sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ representative of ~~each of~~ the <u>word alternative</u> ~~received words~~;

aligning and comparing the sub-word <u>unit labels of</u> ~~units from~~ each generated sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ to identify a number of aligned groups of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~; and

<u>processing the aligned groups of sub-word unit labels identified in said aligning and comparing step to determine an output</u> ~~determining a~~ sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ representative of the received <u>word alternatives</u> ~~words in dependence upon the aligned groups of sub-word units determined in said aligning and comparing step~~.

55.   (Currently Amended) A method of determining a sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ representative of at least two <u>word alternatives</u> ~~words~~ output by a word recognition unit in response to a common input word to be recognised, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

receiving the <u>word alternatives</u> ~~words~~ output by the word recognition unit;

generating<u>, for each received word alternative,</u> a sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ representative of ~~each of~~ the <u>word alternative</u> ~~received words~~;

aligning and comparing the sub-word <u>unit labels of</u> ~~units from~~ each generated sequence of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~ to identify a number of aligned groups of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> ~~units~~; and

processing the aligned groups of sub-word labels identified in said aligning and comparing step to determine an output ~~determining a~~ sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of the at least two word alternatives ~~first and second sequences of sub-word units~~ by determining, for each ~~of the sub-word units in an~~ aligned group, a sub-word unit label that is confusingly similar to the sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the group.

56.   (Currently Amended) A method of determining a sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of at least two word alternatives ~~words~~ output by a word recognition unit in response to a common input word to be recognised, the method comprising:

receiving a first sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of a first one of said at least two word alternatives output by said word recognition unit ~~words~~;

receiving a second sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of a second one of said at least two word alternative output by said word recognition unit ~~words~~;

aligning and comparing sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the first sequence with sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the second sequence to form a number of aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~;

a first comparing step of comparing, for each aligned pair, the first sequence sub-word unit label in the aligned pair with each of a plurality of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ taken from a set of predetermined sub-word unit labels ~~units~~, to provide a corresponding plurality of comparison scores representative of the similarities between the first sequence sub-word unit label and the respective sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the set;

a second comparing step of comparing, for each aligned pair, the second

sequence sub-word unit label in the aligned pair with each of said plurality of sub-word

unit labels ~~units~~ from the set, to provide a further corresponding plurality of comparison

scores representative of the similarities between said second sequence sub-word unit label

and the respective sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the set;

combining the comparison scores obtained when comparing the first and

second sequence sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ in the aligned pair with the same sub-word unit

label from the set, to generate a plurality of combined comparison scores;

a third comparing step of comparing, for each aligned pair, the combined

comparison scores generated in said combining step for the aligned pair; and

determining, for each aligned pair, a sub-word unit representative of the

sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ in the aligned pair in dependence upon a comparison result

output from said third comparing step for the aligned pair.

57.   (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium storing

computer executable process steps to perform a method of determining a sequence of

sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of at least two word alternatives ~~words~~ output by a

word recognition unit in response to a common input word to be recognised, the process

steps comprising ~~the steps of~~:

steps for receiving a first sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~

representative of a first one of said at least two word alternatives output by said word

recognition unit ~~words~~;

- 23 -

steps for receiving a second sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~

representative of a second one of said at least two word alternatives output by the word

recognition unit ~~words~~;

steps for aligning and comparing sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the first

sequence with sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ of the second sequence to form a number of

aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~; and

steps for processing the aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels formed in said

aligning and comparing step to determine an output ~~determining a~~ sequence of sub-word

unit labels ~~units~~ representative of the at least two word alternatives ~~received sequences of~~

~~sub-word units in dependence upon the aligned pairs of sub-word units determined in said~~

~~aligning and comparing step~~.

58.   (Currently Amended) A computer executable program stored on a

computer readable medium, the computer executable program for controlling a processor to

perform a method of determining a sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~ representative of

at least two word alternatives ~~words~~ output by a word recognition unit in response to a

common input word to be recognised, the program comprising:

code for receiving a first sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~

representative of a first one of said at least two word alternatives output by the word

recognition unit ~~words~~;

code for receiving a second sequence of sub-word unit labels ~~units~~

representative of a second one of said at least two word alternative output by the word

recognition unit ~~words~~;

code for aligning and comparing sub-word <u>unit labels</u> <s>units</s> of the first

sequence with sub-word <u>unit labels</u> <s>units</s> of the second sequence to form a number of

aligned pairs of sub-word <u>unit labels</u> <s>units</s>; and

code for <u>processing the aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels formed by said</u>

<u>aligning and comparing code to determine an output</u> <s>determining a</s> sequence of sub-word

<u>unit labels</u> <s>units</s> representative of the <u>at least two word alternatives</u> <s>received sequences of</s>

<s>sub-word units in dependence upon the aligned pairs of sub-word units determined in said</s>

<s>aligning and comparing step</s>.

59.   (New) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said processor is

operable to process the aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels formed by said aligner to

determine an output sequence of sub-word unit labels that is different from the first

sequence of sub-word unit labels and different from the second sequence of sub-word unit

labels and which is representative of the at least two word alternatives.

60.   (New) A method according to claim 29, wherein said processing

step processes the aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels formed in said aligning step, to

determine an output sequence of sub-word unit labels which is different from the first

sequence of sub-word unit labels and different from the second sequence of sub-word unit

labels and which is representative of the at least two word alternatives.

61.   (New) An apparatus for determining a sequence of sub-word unit

labels representative of at least two word alternatives output by a word recognition unit in response to a common input word to be recognised, the apparatus comprising:

means for receiving a first sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of a first one of said at least two word alternatives output by said word recognition unit and for receiving a second sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of a second one of said at least two word alternatives output by said word recognition unit;

means for aligning and for comparing sub-word unit labels of the first sequence with sub-word labels of the second sequence to form a number of aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels; and

means for processing aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels formed by said aligning means to determine an output sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of the least two word alternatives.

62.   (New) An apparatus for determining a sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of at least two words, the apparatus comprising:

means for receiving a first sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of a first word and for receiving a second sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of a second word;

means for aligning sub-word unit labels of the first sequence with sub-word unit labels of the second sequence to form a number aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels; and

means for processing the aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels formed by said aligning means to determine an output sequence of sub-word unit labels representative

of the first and second sequence of sub-word unit labels by determining, for each aligned pair of sub-word unit labels, a sub-word unit label that is confusingly similar to the sub-word unit labels of the aligned pair.

63.   (New) An apparatus for determining a sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of at least two word alternatives output by a word recognition unit in response to a common input word to be recognised, the apparatus comprising:

means for receiving the word alternatives output by the word recognition unit;

means for generating for each received word alternative, a sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of th word alternative;

means for aligning and comparing the sub-word unit labels of each generated sequence of sub-word unit labels to identify a number aligned groups of sub-word unit labels; and

means for processing the aligned groups of sub-word unit labels identified by said aligning means, to determine an output sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of the received word alternatives.

64.   (New) An apparatus for determining a sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of at least two word alternatives output by a word recognition unit in response to a common input word to be recognised, the apparatus comprising:

means for receiving the at least two word alternatives output by the word recognition unit;

means for generating, for each received word alternative, a sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of the received word alternative;

means for aligning and comparing the sub-word unit labels of each generated sequence of sub-word unit labels to identify a number aligned groups of sub-word unit labels; and

means for processing the aligned groups of sub-word unit labels identified by said aligning means to determine an output sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of the at least two word alternatives by determining, for each aligned group of sub-word unit labels, a sub-word unit label that is confusingly similar to the sub-word unit labels of the group.

65.   (New) An apparatus for determining a sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of at least two word alternatives output by a word recognition unit in response to a common input word to be recognised, the apparatus comprising:

means for receiving a first sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of a first one of said at least two word alternatives output by said word recognition unit and for receiving a second sequence of sub-word unit labels representative of a second one of said at least two word alternatives output by said word recognition unit;

means for aligning and for comparing sub-word unit labels of the first sequence with sub-word unit labels of the second sequence to form a number of aligned pairs of sub-word unit labels;

first comparing means for comparing, for each aligned pair, the first sequence sub-word unit label in the aligned pair with each of a plurality of sub-word unit

labels taken from a set of predetermined sub-word unit labels, to provide a corresponding plurality of comparison scores representative of the similarities between the first sequence sub-word unit label and the respective sub-word unit labels of the set;

second comparing means for comparing, for each aligned pair, the second sequence sub-word unit label in the aligned pair with each of said plurality of sub-word unit labels from the set, to provide a further corresponding plurality of comparison scores representative of the similarities between said second sequence sub-word unit label and their respective sub-word unit labels of the set;

means for combining the comparison scores obtained when comparing the first and second sequence sub-word unit labels in the aligned pair with the same sub-word unit labels from the set, to generate a plurality of combined comparison scores;

third comparing means for comparing, for each aligned pair, the combined comparison scores generated by said combining means for the aligned pair; and

means for determining, for each aligned pair of sub-word unit labels, a sub-word unit label representative of the sub-word unit labels in the aligned pair in dependence upon a comparison result output by said third comparing means for the aligned pair.